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UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

Report of the Secretary-General

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report provides an overview of the programmes and capacities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS). The detailed information in the annex highlights the responses to priorities identified by the Governing Council in its decision 93/30 of 18 June 1993 and gives special attention to the enhancement of national capacity-building undertaken in response to General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992. Addendum 1 contains information on publications and meetings in 1993 while statistical information is provided in addendum 2.

II. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

2. DDSMS provides technical and managerial support and advisory services to Member States in the interrelated areas of: (a) development policies and planning; (b) human resources and social development; (c) natural resources and environment planning and management; (d) energy planning and management; (e) governance and public administration; (f) public finance and enterprise management; and (g) national execution and capacity-building. It also provides research and parliamentary services to expert groups and intergovernmental bodies in these sectors.

3. The Department thus addresses the priorities for good governance by assisting governments in fostering the necessary conditions and tools for sustainable human development - strong and efficient institutions and competent human resources to manage them. The strengthened technical capacities of the Department are now at the disposal of the Secretary-General, the funding bodies, and the member States in these critical areas. Moreover, as part of this, a new collaborative relationship is being established with the United Nations regional commissions in the area of natural resources and energy, with other Secretariat entities in the area of the relief-to-development continuum, and with UNDP in several areas of substantive support.

4. In view of its location, DDSMS constitutes a natural link between the normative functions of the Secretariat and the operational activities funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other entities. The Department is also part of a broader scheme intended to result in greater impact through closer coordination of assistance by all units of the Secretariat and linking the economic and social dimension with the peace-keeping and humanitarian aspects of the work of the United Nations. In this way, more effective attention can be given to the relief-to-development continuum.

5. Resources for the work of DDSMS come from the United Nations regular budget of assessed contributions from Member States, and from extrabudgetary contributions made available through reimbursement of support costs for project activities funded mainly by UNDP, and by UNFPA, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and other multilateral and bilateral sources.

6. Total project expenditures of DDSMS in 1993 were about $126 million, in relation to over 700 projects in a dozen substantive sectors. UNDP funded about $64 million of this, for the implementation of projects and technical support (TSS-1 and TSS-2) activities. Some 44 per cent of expenditures were in Africa, with another 23 per cent in the Asia and Pacific region. To carry out such projects, the Department last year fielded about 1,200 international consultants to work in collaboration with national personnel. Over half of DDSMS project expenditures were for technical expertise and advice by consultants and Headquarters specialists. Training is a vital component of such activities: in 1993 training placements were made for some 3,300 persons from over 100 countries.

7. The Department derives intergovernmental guidance from, and provides substantive support to (a) the Committee on Natural Resources; (b) the Commission on Sustainable Development; (c) the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development; and (d) the Meetings of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. The Department also supports other bodies, such as the biennial Meeting of National Recruitment Services. In addition, the numerous technical gatherings convened by the Department offer a setting for exchanges with government representatives and experts who help to shape the priorities and orientations of future work.

III. DECENTRALIZATION IN NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY

8. In its resolution 48/218, the General Assembly endorsed an increase in the general share of resources for activities considered by the regional commissions under the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation, from approximately 40 to 60 per cent in the 1994-1995 biennium. In its resolution 48/261 of 14 July 1994, the General Assembly endorsed proposals for decentralization in the field of natural resources and energy.

9. The decentralization in natural resources and energy is intended to lead to a single, integrated technical cooperation programme, with participation by both DDSMS and the regional commissions, with DDSMS as the focal point for technical cooperation in the Secretariat. The programme will be supervised by a policy-making management board chaired by the Under-Secretary-General/DDSMS

and including the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions. The board will review programmes, and monitor and evaluate progress and developments. All available expertise at headquarters and in the regional commissions will be at the disposal of the entire programme.

10. Global responsibilities for water, now shared between DDSMS and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), will be entrusted to UNEP, and global responsibilities for minerals will be entrusted to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), both within existing resources.

11. A new collaborative relationship has been set in motion, to guarantee the maintenance of a critical mass of technical capacity, and to facilitate a more efficient provision of assistance. The regional commissions will be engaged more closely in the technical cooperation activities in natural resources and energy being undertaken in their respective regions; cooperation between headquarters and regional advisers will facilitate exchanges of information and experience; and travel costs should also be reduced. To implement the new arrangements, a number of Professional and General Service posts are being redeployed from DDSMS to the commissions. This gives practical effect to the decentralization and facilitates the development of joint programmes.

12. The first meeting of the management board was held in New York in June 1994. Participants agreed on a series of steps for implementing the joint programming concept in terms of operations, programme formulation, technical studies, capacity-building, a joint data base, and joint policy development. A number of priority areas were identified in which pilot projects might be undertaken as exercises in joint programming. DDSMS and the regional commissions are currently preparing revised programmes of work, and are building a common base of information on project portfolios, technical staff, and plans for seminars and publications, in light of these agreements.

IV. COOPERATION WITH UNDP

13. DDSMS is forging new and closer links with UNDP, aimed at strengthening collaboration on the basis of mandated responsibilities and comparative advantages in areas such as economic advice for Africa, public management and governance, private sector support, and natural resources and environment.

14. Joint review of the work programmes of the corresponding units is leading to joint activities and other forms of collaboration. The types of work involved include missions, studies, project support, programme development, seminars, and related endeavours. More regular contacts at headquarters and through the field structure will be held to encourage linkages on both upstream and operational issues. Recent examples of collaboration include joint efforts to develop public sector programmes in Viet Nam and Cambodia; participation of a DDSMS interregional adviser as resource staff in training for UNDP field economists on the programme approach and on the strengthening of capabilities for economic management in several countries of West Africa; and preparation for and participation in the donor

round-table conference for the Seychelles. Focal points and responsibilities have been designated for several combined efforts between the Regional Bureau for Africa economists and the DDSMS Development Policies and Planning Branch.

15. The synergy being developed relates to the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat and the sharpening of focus for its technical cooperation activities. It also relates to the initiatives for change in UNDP for functional and structural reform, including the rebuilding of substantive partnerships within the United Nations system. Indeed it is desirable that closer working-level and institutional arrangements be developed between DDSMS and UNDP in light of the UNDP central funding and coordination role on the one hand and the technical mandates and competence of DDSMS on the other.

V. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

16. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1994/26 and Add. 1);

2. Welcome the steps taken to sharpen the technical focus of United Nations technical cooperation through the Department for Development Support and Management Services;

3. Welcome the emphasis given by the Department to strengthening national capacities for programme management and project execution and implementation in the broad field of governance and public management;

4. Welcome the Department's interdisciplinary approach to technical cooperation in the broad fields of governance and public management to establish the enabling environment for the achievement of sustainable human development;

5. Note and encourage the steps being taken towards closer collaboration between the Department and the regional commissions, and other entities of the Secretariat, and between the Department and the United Nations Development Programme in relation to areas of common concern and, in this context, urge the Programme to rely on the technical capacities of DDSMS in the broad field of governance and public management.

Annex

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT IN THE WORK OF DDSMS

I. DIVISION OF ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. DDSMS responsibilities in this Division focus on: (a) development policies and planning for economic management; (b) human resources and social development; (c) natural resources and environment planning and management; and (d) energy planning and management.

A. Development policies and planning

2. Technical cooperation support through this Branch of DDSMS is multidisciplinary, including macro-economic planning and management, formulation of socio-economic development strategies and policies, and preparing and implementing regional (sub-national) and local action programmes. The economic difficulties and limited resources in many countries, particularly in Africa, shape the priorities for attention. The Branch concentrates its efforts on such areas as public investment programming and management; structural adjustment, recovery and economic transition programmes, and monitoring of their social and economic effects; foreign-debt issues; computerized information systems for planning and management; and support to government coordination of external financial assistance and technical cooperation. Activities are also being undertaken in support of conversion of military and industrial complexes for peaceful, developmental purposes.

3. Work emphasizes both the programme approach and assistance to countries in devising their national programmes. This constitutes a double role - functional and substantive. DDSMS helped support programme formulation exercises in seven African countries in 1993, and is also taking up assistance to governments in the preparation of country strategy notes.

4. The Branch has recently completed the development of a computerized information system to assist key agencies of governments concerned with macroeconomic and financial management, normally ministries of planning and finance and the central banks. The system greatly facilitates econometric analysis, national budget preparation and modelling, debt programmes and investment programme planning and monitoring. The first version of this Public Sector Planning and Management Information System (PSPMIS) has been demonstrated in several countries and is now available and ready for installation upon request.

5. Also associated with this Branch is the DDSMS Transition Economies Unit. The Unit is responsible for operational research, training and other activities to strengthen integrated planning development, and management capacity, for reform implementation in countries with economies in transition. The work focuses on (a) integrated socio-economic management; (b) micro-economic policy during transition, including privatization, restructuring of enterprise management, and entrepreneurship; and (c) strategies for accelerating economic growth, including regional and urban management and free economic zones. The Unit collaborates with various parts of the Department,

UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations specialized agencies.

B. Human resources and social development

6. This Branch was created to give greater visibility and impact to operational activities in human resource development and to underscore the vital importance of the social dimension in economic development. The Branch is involved in the planning, coordination and implementation of cross sectoral programmes in social and integrated rural development.

7. Relevant functions include activities that address the social dimensions of structural adjustment; the fostering of grass-roots social and remunerative activities, involving also the role and contributions of women; maximizing the involvement of beneficiaries in decision-making; and management of community-based activities. Projects may involve whole communities or specific groups, especially those marginalized or vulnerable. Work includes activities designed to provide social safety nets in the transition from centrally planned to market economies; establishment of research facilities for the formulation of social policies, and provision of training for staff of social welfare institutions. Advisory services focus on strengthening national capacities in social policy and programme design; forecasting techniques for base populations and their critical components, including demographic planning; and assistance in the coordination of external assistance in relation to national demographic and socio-economic development priorities.

8. Design of social welfare programmes in areas of conflict, and re-integration of ex-combatants are new and important areas of attention for DDSMS. First instances of such efforts are in Croatia, El Salvador, Liberia and Mozambique.

C. Natural resources and environment planning and management

9. This Branch provides support to strengthen the capacity of countries in carrying out improved planning, management and use of natural resources, including water and mineral resources; to promote the rational use of these resources in conformity with social, economic and environmental considerations, including Agenda 21; to assist in establishing environmental institutions and offices involved in natural resources issues and in strengthening their multidisciplinary capabilities; and to integrate environmental management more effectively within the national economy. The Branch helps to plan, formulate and manage the implementation of environmentally sound energy policies and plans, and to strengthen institutional, legal and financial mechanisms. The Branch also engages in physical infrastructure and transport development, and in the application of the latest appropriate techniques in remote sensing, surveying and mapping.

10. DDSMS is rapidly expanding its cross-sectoral activities for the protection of the environment. The Department is involved in activities such as establishing environmental information systems, creating environmental audit and regulation systems, disaster prevention and mitigation, conduct of policy consultations and sustainable development, environmental planning and the regional exchange of environmental information.

11. The Branch contributes substantive support for sessions of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Commission on Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The Branch prepares several periodical publications. It provides support to settlement of disputes and establishment of joint arrangements among countries, e.g., those sharing rivers or ground-water basins. It also participates in special missions, good offices, and emergency and humanitarian relief services related to natural resources.

12. As one example of work accomplished, a water project in northern China has developed, as a principal product, a computer-based decision support system. The system uses a suite of interactive programmes to model hydrology, water system operations and pertinent economic inputs and outputs. The process is controlled by a multi-objective analysis programme. The system facilitates decision-making on investment programmes for water resources management in the context of other economic, social and environmental objectives. Interactive computer models deriving from this project were demonstrated at a DDSMS-sponsored training workshop held in Beijing in 1993.

D. Energy planning and management

13. This Branch helps to assess the requirements of countries to exploit and manage energy resources in a sustainable, environmentally sound manner. Current priorities concentrate on the following areas of demand: environmental management in the exploration and development of energy resources, including oil, gas, coal, and others; energy efficiency in energy supply, conversion and end-use; commercialization of new and renewable energy applications; and transfer of clean coal technologies. Activities of the Branch aim to strengthen the capacities of countries to carry out energy management efforts through the elaboration of policies and programmes; to develop mechanisms, including framework legislation in the context of Agenda 21; to formulate and review national energy development plans; and to access and use environmentally sound technology, including that related to waste management.

14. The Branch also provides substantive support for the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development, and the Commission on Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

15. As an example of work, a sizable project in Zimbabwe, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), aims to expand solar electricity usage in rural areas, thus reducing the need for conventional electrical grid extension and its related cost and pollution. DDSMS technical support helps to upgrade the domestic solar manufacturing and delivery infrastructure, and helps to expand the commercial market for purchase of home solar systems through low-interest financing.

16. In another GEF-funded project, in Peru, assistance to the non-governmental Centre for Energy Conservation consists of support to a baseline study of environmental impacts of energy use and establishment of a national energy conservation programme. The study is quantifying contaminant emissions from industry and thermal power stations in order to make recommendations for policy and regulatory action. The conservation programme, linked to energy

audits and staff training, is directly assisting private enterprises in energy-saving measures. Potential savings amount to some eight million barrels of oil annually.

II. DIVISION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

17. DDSMS responsibilities in this Division focus on: (a) governance and public administration; (b) public finance and enterprise management; and (c) support to national execution and capacity-building.

A. Governance and public administration

18. This Branch of DDSMS engages in research and seminars, publications, advisory services, and technical cooperation project support. The work deals with structure and systems of governance, and management training. In the first area, priorities include assistance to countries to reform their administrative and managerial systems; to promote decentralization, local self-governance, and improved municipal governance, particularly in major cities; and to improve management through better use of information technologies. The Branch reviews periodically developments and trends in governance and public management, and prepares a variety of technical reports. The Branch is also embarking on new initiatives in the area of governance, public administration and capacity-building in countries with economies in transition and in some other challenging situations, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Gaza Strip and Jericho.

19. As concerns management training, the Branch emphasizes the development of guidelines for use in management and deployment of human resources, and the design and implementation of management development programmes. Assistance to training institutions helps to develop the curriculum, improve training methods and design training packages. Capacity-building efforts to re-examine and adjust development policies, programmes and budgets, take into account environmental aspects, including assessment of training needs for raising environmental awareness among public officials, and integrating environmental issues into training curricula.

20. Building upon its efforts in studying the complex of issues related to size and cost of the civil service, particularly in Africa, the Branch is preparing guidelines on improvement of public personnel policy and rationalization of civil service systems. In June 1994, in cooperation with the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), and the Government of Morocco, convened a Pan African conference of ministers of civil service, to take stock of recent experiences and to issue recommendations for strengthening public sector human resource management systems.

21. In another example of work, DDSMS and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government jointly organized a World Conference on Metropolitan Governance, in April 1993. About five hundred participants attended, including mayors and high-level managers of large cities of the world with populations over one million. The conference adopted a declaration on metropolitan governance. Based on

that, a programme has been set up in the Branch to provide regular assistance for improving municipal functioning and to organize seminars and workshops on related issues.

B. Public finance and enterprise management

22. This Branch provides expertise, training and operational research to address financial management problems in the public sector, and to support public sector enterprise reform and private sector development. Efforts concentrate on assisting countries to improve financial management performance, especially as part of structural adjustment processes, and to improve accountability. Another focus is taxation, including activities to develop and promote effective mobilization of financial resources, efforts to combat tax evasion and measures to reform tax systems.

23. DDSMS organized an interregional workshop on the development of small and medium enterprises and cooperatives in developing countries in transition, in Hanoi in early 1994, in cooperation with the Private Sector Development Programme of UNDP, the World Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Central Council of Cooperative Unions and Small and Medium Enterprises of Viet Nam. Participants came from Cambodia, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal and Viet Nam, as well as from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations of the United Nations system. The objective of the workshop was to assist governments and NGOs to design and implement policies to promote indigenous entrepreneurship.

24. Another example of work, the aid management and accountability initiative, is financed by seven donors (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and UNDP) and guided by a working group of donors and host countries. From 1991 to 1993 this has reviewed the accountability environment of selected donor and host countries, with a view to harmonize and simplify aid accountability requirements, and to develop a broadly acceptable model of accountability. The Department has developed a general framework for possible adoption by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and is presently customizing the framework for national programmes.

C. National execution and capacity-building

25. Major resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on operational activities of the United Nations system, in particular resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989 and 47/199 of 22 December 1992, have emphasized the need to strengthen and fully utilize national capacities as the prime requisite for self-reliance. Technical cooperation programmes are responding to this, as is seen in several Governing Council decisions, the shift of UNDP funding to national execution and the related UNDP new regime of support costs.

26. Support to national execution and capacity-building is also in itself a theme for technical cooperation efforts, requiring a focus on institut[illegible]-building and human resources development. Activities throughout DDSMS are responding to country needs and intergovernmental requests. More specifically, concern for the subject has led to the establishment of a new Branch in the Department.

27. The importance of developing local expertise and the role of the United Nations in this were focal points of debate at the Thirteenth Biennial Meeting of National Recruitment Services, held in Cairo, Egypt, in early 1993. DDSMS has responsibility for organizing and servicing these meetings. The representatives from 64 countries and 18 United Nations and other agencies who attended adopted the "Cairo Plan of Action", the text of which was provided to the Governing Council at its fortieth session (1993). In its decision 93/30, the Council took note of the report of the meeting, encouraged DDSMS to help to strengthen national capacities for programme management and project execution and implementation, and requested the Department to pay particular attention to improving its capacity-building techniques within its area of competence.

28. The National Execution and Capacity-Building Branch of DDSMS is responsible for action and for coordination of pertinent departmental efforts. Its main functions are advisory services and training on the process aspects of project and administrative support; broader institution-building and training as identified jointly with governments and in coordination with other agencies and field offices; and organization of interregional seminars and workshops for management training.

29. As recommended in the Cairo Plan, the Branch is developing its abilities as a clearing house and information centre on the mobilization of expertise, administration of fellowships and related training, procedures for procurement of goods and services, and project financial management. The Branch is participating with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, in preparing a series of training modules for courses for government officials. It is also establishing cooperative linkages with private institutions such as New York University, Bocconi University of Milan, MASHAV of Israel, and others, in formulating and developing curricula and training modules, and in conducting training activities.

30. Preliminary success with workshops in the past two years has contributed to the establishment of the new Branch. Four such workshops have been organized, in English, French, Spanish and Chinese. A fifth workshop, held in June 1994, was organized for members of the League of Arab States. The workshops address the themes of project formulation and the human factor in technical cooperation, including the dual nature of national recruitment services and related agencies, as instruments both for import and export of skills. To consolidate the benefits of these meetings, DDSMS is expanding its work to provide a mix of workshops, on-the-job training and consultancy missions to requesting countries, for better programme and project design, implementation and management.